

Planning for War: A System

By RICHARD W. GOODALE, JR.

As the defense establishment adapts in the wake of the Cold War, war plans and the system used to develop them must also adapt. A few years ago war plans—known as a global family of plans due to their impact and interrelationships—were structured to meet the now defunct Soviet threat. The system that generated them was ponderous, producing huge plans in exacting detail for moving large forces to forward theaters.

Besides fighting major regional conflicts, however, the emerging national security strategy anticipates new uses for the Armed Forces—deploying on short notice, on unanticipated missions, with smaller forces anywhere in the world for operations other than war. In addition to continuing requirements to conduct noncombatant evacuation operations, new missions include peacekeeping, peace enforcement, disaster relief, and humanitarian assistance. As missions evolve so too must the planning system. Planning must be visionary, quick, flexible, and adaptive. To achieve that end we must understand the architecture of the planning system and on-going initiatives to improve that antiquated apparatus.

A Confusion in Terms

The members of the Joint Planning and Execution Community (JPEC) practice a somewhat arcane art that is understood only by those who master its unique vocabulary. The terminology, like any technical language, facilitates communication among the members of the community, but it often excludes the uninitiated from exercising a proper role in monitoring the planning process.

To help dispel the fog and grasp the changes taking place, we must first examine the types of planning and how the pieces of the puzzle fit together.

Various types of planning are related in a hierarchy under the rubric of military planning. According to emerging doctrine (see Joint Pub 5-0, *Doctrine for Planning Joint Operations*), planning for employing forces is “. . . performed at all echelons throughout the range of military operations from operations other than war to war.” Thus war planning is developing in support of national security strategy. This wider perspective is found on the second tier of planning and has two components, *force planning* and *joint operational planning*.

Force planning involves creating and maintaining “military capabilities such as organizing, training, equipping, and providing forces for assignment to combatant commands.” Driven by the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS), it is the responsibility of the military departments and services. *Joint operational planning* entails “the employment of military forces to support a military strategy and attain specified objectives” and—under the Joint Strategic Planning System (JSPS)—the primary responsibility of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) and commanders in chief (CINCs). The operational planning element on the second tier deals with a more germane, warfighting-related part of the puzzle. “Contingency planning is the development of plans for potential

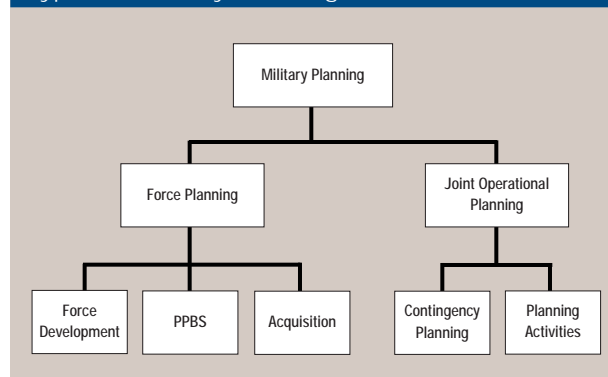
crisis involving military requirements that can reasonably be expected in an area of responsibility (AOR).”

Contingency Planning

The joint operational planning framework is the starting point for contingency planning. “Joint operational planning includes contingency planning—preparation of joint operation plans by the combatant commanders—as well as those joint planning activities that support the development of contingency plans.” The activities include mobilization, deployment, employment, sustainment, and redeployment of forces. Contingency planning, however, becomes the focal point of the third tier of military planning. It is “the development of plans for potential crisis involving military requirements that can reasonably be expected in an AOR.”

Contingency planning spans the full range of military operations under deliberate or crisis action conditions. These conditions establish the basis for two more types of planning—*deliberate* and *crisis action*. The center of gravity in this framework should be deliberate rather than crisis action planning. The latter occurs when an operations staff element adapts the existing deliberate plan.

Types of Military Planning

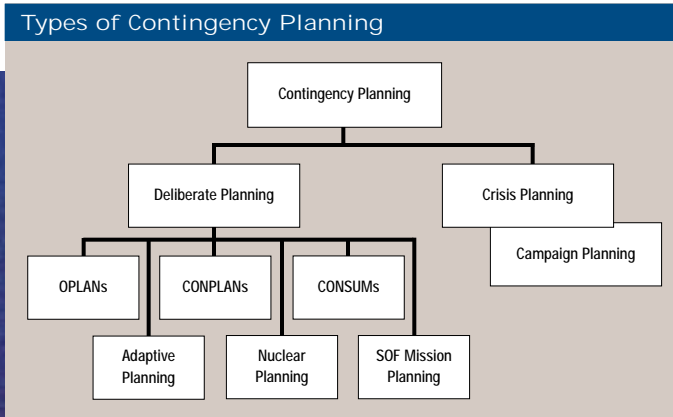


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Therefore, to be of value deliberate plans should become a baseline for developing a crisis response. "The deliberate planning process supports methodical, fully coordinated, and complex planning by the entire [JPEC]."

Deliberate Planning

Deliberate planning is a process for developing plans in peacetime under the Joint Operation Planning and Execution System (JOPES), the dreaded *J-word*. It uses automatic data processing (ADP) tools that are often criticized. JOPES is complicated, detailed, time consuming, and not crisis-oriented. It is important to stress, however, that it provides policies and procedures for deliberate planning that are common and useful to planners. CINCs, services, combat support agencies, and the rest of JPEC need an interoperable system to support the warfighter developing and disseminating planning information.

"The deliberate planning process supports methodical, fully coordinated, and complex planning by the entire [JPEC]." This process is unlike crisis action planning, which is also a JOPES process which entails the rapid development of operation orders for responding to crises. The deliberate planning process focuses

on deployment, sustainment, and redeployment and serves as the baseline for transition to crisis action planning.

Confusion surrounding the puzzle is attributed to other aspects of deliberate planning, some new, some old. They include adaptive planning, adaptive joint force packaging, nuclear planning, and Special Operations Forces (SOF) mission planning, and are subsets of deliberate planning.

Adaptive planning is a concept delineated in planning guidance by CJCS and CINCs. This guidance tasks CINCs with developing flexibility in deliberate plans in order to apply them, with some modification, to unforeseen or unexpected contingencies in crisis action planning. Adaptive planning assists in laying the groundwork for future crisis management. By applying this concept, CINCs consider various likely or possible crisis responses for incorporation in deliberate plans. For example, flexible deterrent options (FDOs) are considered in deliberate planning for peacetime situations and circumstances involving regional instability, to rapidly deter or forestall a crisis.

Adaptive joint force packages (AJFPs) are based on another deliberate planning concept that was developed by the Commander in Chief,

Atlantic (CINCUSACOM), and approved by CJCS. As joint force integrator, CINCUSACOM is building standard CONUS-based joint force packages to meet the needs of supported CINCs. The concept calls for tailoring the packages to meet specific military capabilities.

Conceptually, AJFPs are similar to a JOPES function, namely, developing a force module (or combat unit building blocks with associated combat support elements, combat service support elements, and sustainment) as well as Time-Phased Force Deployment Data (TPFDD) packages. But there is a difference between AJFPs and force modules: the former are specifically trained as joint teams for rapid delivery to meet the needs of supported CINCs while the latter are not.

Non-strategic nuclear planning is another part of deliberate planning. It follows a JOPES process to develop nuclear options in support of CINC operation plans (OPLANs). Similarly, SOF mission planning produces deliberate plans for employing SOF when directed by the National Command Authorities (NCA) and CJCS. All of the above pieces enhance a proactive approach to deliberate planning and assist in developing an adaptive and quick response to crises. According to Joint Pub 1, *Joint Warfare of the U.S. Armed Forces*, "Campaign planning represents the art of linking battles and engagements in an operational design to accomplish strategic objectives."

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Campaign Planning

Frequently equated to deliberate planning, "Campaign planning represents the art of linking battles and engagements in an operational design to accomplish strategic objectives." This reflects the doctrine developed in Joint Pub 3-0 and guides employing forces when conflict is imminent. Campaign planning includes "the need to plan for related, simultaneous, and sequential operations and the imperative to accomplish strategic objectives through these operations."

Campaign plans are not a formal part of JOPES. While deliberate plans require adaptive planning with alternatives for a contingency, campaign plans focus on clearly defined objectives. "Campaign planning is done in crisis or conflict (once the actual threat, national guidance, and available resources become evident), but the basis and framework for successful campaigns is laid by peacetime analysis, planning, and exercises." For this reason, campaign plans are not normally created until the execution planning phase of crisis action planning.

Based on the campaign plan, appropriate elements then translate into the operation order (OPORD) format of JOPES for execution. Campaign planning therefore diminishes as the scale of contemplated operations and the imminence of hostilities decrease. A CINC, however, develops courses of action for the campaign plan based on existing OPLANs and operation plans in concept format (CONPLANs), if potential conflicts were adequately anticipated in deliberate planning.

The characteristics of campaign plans that have not been part of JOPES-structured plans include a commander's strategic, operational,

and tactical intent; identification of enemy strategic, operational, and tactical centers of gravity with guidance at the macro-level for defeating them; identification of friendly strategic, operational, and tactical centers of gravity as well as guidance at the macro-level to protect them; and operational phasing (viz., pre-hostilities, lodgment, decisive combat and stabilization, follow-through, and post-hostilities, per Joint Pub 3-0) which includes a commander's intent and guidance to component commanders



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for each phase. Campaign plans can and should be created in peacetime for certain set-piece environments (such as Korea where the mission, forces, and centers of gravity are clearly defined).

Deliberate Planning Problems

There are some problems with the current deliberate planning system that lead to arguments for eliminating or changing the system. One

problem is that TPFDD development takes too long and is not crisis oriented, provided that deliberate planning is supposed to facilitate rapid transition to crisis response. It is not unusual to see a single TPFDD development cycle take 18-24 months or longer given the various refinement conferences, on-going service reorganizations with resultant changes to databases, and high priority diversions of planning staffs by contingency operations.

Additionally, TPFDD development involves overly detailed planning, often with outdated force structure, and depends on complicated ADP support using old technology. The complexity of ADP demands that deliberate planners who are familiar with the TPFDD development become involved early in the crisis response. It is this complexity that inadvertently causes crisis execution to lag behind the decisionmaking process.

A related problem alluded to above is that many standard database reference files describing unit deployment requirements and maintained by the service components are out of date because of labor-intensive maintenance of TPFDDs and the scarcity of TPFDD-skilled personnel.

Another criticism is that joint doctrine for deliberate planning focuses solely on deployment and sustainment. The deliberate planning process does not emphasize the employment

aspects of tactical and operational planning highlighted in campaign planning. So deliberate plans cannot be pulled off the shelf and executed, something that was never intended. Operation orders are created (OPORDs) from OPLANs for execution. We do not execute OPLANs, we implement them.

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Deliberate Planning Advantages

In spite of drawbacks, the deliberate planning system has advantages. First, it establishes policies and procedures for planning by all the combatant commanders, component commanders, services, and combat support agencies. Having a well founded and frequently utilized system in place provides a baseline for crisis action planning. As General Norman Schwarzkopf noted in the lessons learned from Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm: "The process of developing combined operation plans is at least as important as the actual plans that are produced." His statement is similar to Moltke's observation that: "Plans are nothing, but planning is everything."

Second, deliberate planning fosters a cadre of operational and logistical planners and ADP support personnel trained and experienced in deploying and sustaining forces. Deliberate planning allows JPEC to develop processes, procedures, and planning expertise that is essential in crisis action planning. These experienced planners help minimize the chaos during large deployments at the onset of crises.

A third advantage of deliberate planning, sometimes considered a disadvantage by planning staffs, is the preparation of a multitude of associated JOPES annexes and appendices. This forces planners to develop "how to" documents at combatant command level for specific combat support functions that are handled as routine operating procedures at tactical level. An example is logistics. At tactical level units rely on standing operating procedures (SOPs) for logistic support functions and simply refer to those SOPs in OPORDs. Tactical air control, medical evacuation, command, and signal are other examples. Despite joint doctrine, joint staffs do not have SOPs for these types of theater support operations. Preparing annexes and appendices compels a staff to find the ways to accomplish these aspects of joint warfighting that would be almost impossible to develop in a timely fashion during a crisis.



U.S. Navy (John Kristoffersen)

Deliberate planning also serves as a common reference point for JPEC responses to crises. The development process involves significant critical and creative thought as well as coordination within the planning community that is invaluable in the course of action development. The report to Congress on *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War* stated: "As with all plans, some modifications were made to account for circumstances unique to the crisis. Modification was done with relative ease compared with requirements of starting operations without a base document."

One CINC recently iterated this point in a message about the deliberate planning process:

It would be a monumental task to develop a complex campaign plan for a major regional contingency during a period of crisis without any prior planning. In the deliberate planning process (i.e., the calm before a crisis onset), many crucial issues are debated and decisions reached. These critical decisions include forces apportioned versus plan requirements, command and control relationships, logistics sourcing, force movement tables, pre-conflict actions, coalition building, and host nation support requirements. All of these



U.S. Army (Gary Bryant)

issues are specific and unique to each OPLAN and must be predetermined, on the shelf, and ready for immediate execution.

Lastly, deliberate planning provides a link to JSPS to help meet Title 10 obligations. CJCS is responsible for developing contingency, joint mobility, and logistic plans; analyzing deficiencies and strengths in military capabilities; evaluating preparedness to accomplish assigned missions; and identifying contingency planning risks and shortfalls. All these aspects complement the defense planning requirements and PPBS alluded to earlier.

Deliberate Planning Improvements

Various initiatives offer remedies to deliberate planning problems. The focus on flexibility, responsiveness, and adaptability to

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crisis action planning includes AJFPs, the Technical Insertion Program (TIP), the Global Command and Control System (GCCS), and doctrinal changes. While AJFPs are still under development, they enhance the transition to crisis response by using highly skilled, rapidly deliverable forces fully capable of operating as a joint team. The initial AJFPs will reflect collaborative efforts in deliberate planning between CINCUSACOM and supported CINCs for military operations short of war. ACOM will also continue to plan for the deployment of CONUS-based forces required by supported CINCs for major regional contingencies.

TIP was instituted on termination of the Worldwide Military Command and Control System (WWMCCS) ADP Modernization (WAM) program. TIP speeds TPFDD development, enhancing crisis action planning. It allows operations and logistics planners to work concurrently rather than sequentially in building TPFDD. Also, TIP transportation model applications, Dynamic Analysis and Planning Tool (DART), and Joint Flow Analysis System for Transportation (JFAST) provide a quick evaluation of lift requirements.

TIP bridges JOPES ADP and future GCCS. As GCCS evolves it should incorporate all the functionality of JOPES. Although still in its development stage, GCCS should resolve many current ADP support problems associated with deliberate planning.

As planning evolves emerging doctrine will offer a remedy to inherent planning shortfalls in employment guidelines for deliberate plans, particularly OPLANs. Proposed changes to JOPES pubs provide for incorporating selected campaign planning elements



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to clarify employment aspects of OPLANs.

While service component and joint force commanders normally do detailed employment planning for the actual use of forces, a certain level of detail at theater level serves a valuable role by communicating a CINC's purpose, requirements, and objectives. Since NCA needs deliberate plans the level of detail is important. By including selected campaign

plan elements in deliberate plans CINCs provide NCA and CJCS information for inter-theater coordination and decisions at national level.

Current proposals call for JOPES to incorporate the following items in deliberate planning: a CINC's strategic, operational, and (if appropriate) tactical intent; identification of an enemy's strategic, operational, and tactical centers of gravity to include theater-level guidance for

defeating them; identification of friendly strategic, operational, and tactical centers of gravity and theater-level guidance for protecting them; and phasing to reflect operations and conditions accomplished during prehostilities, lodgment, decisive combat (plus stabilization), follow through, and posthostilities (including redeployment). These amendments would ensure a clearer understanding of a CINC's concept of operations by all parties tasked with a supporting role.

In sum, those who question deliberate planning are right, the process does have significant problems. But by and large JPEC recognizes this fact and is working to fix the problems. Some remedies such as AJFPs provide enhancements in the near term. Others, like GCCS and changes in doctrine, will take longer. Given the complexity of the problems the rate at which the process is being improved is probably about right.

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